

HEALTHY FOOD – FOOD SERVICE POLICY

Rationale

- NSA in partnership with parents/carers, have a responsibility to assist students develop an understanding of appropriate nutrition and guide them towards making food choices which enhance their health.
- *“A healthy eating pattern is fundamental to the maintenance of good health and wellbeing. Healthy eating benefits almost every aspect of our health, throughout our lifetime,”* (Australian Guide to Healthy Eating).
- Further, *“nutrition is particularly important in the childhood years, which are a time of rapid growth and development. Healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle assist children to develop and grow to their potential, thus contributing to optimal educational outcomes and a healthy adult life,”* (Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Program).
- Students who have Autism Syndrome Disorder (ASD), regularly need encouragement to broaden their food choices and maintain a healthy balanced diet. The role of the school is to provide information about healthy balanced diets as well as providing opportunity for students to experience breadth in their food choices.
- A school culture in which students actively choose nutritious foods and a healthy lifestyle supports learning and health outcomes for children and young people, addressing the rise in obesity and other preventable diet-related conditions.
- To support healthy eating culture in schools, the Department has a  [School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy \(pdf - 578.58kb\)](#) (the policy) in place to set out principles which promote healthy eating, and address food selection and food categories in developing a healthy school food service.
- The policy applies to all Victorian government schools including primary, secondary, special and language schools.
- School food services can have a major impact on the foods and drinks that students are exposed to and consume. Enjoyment of healthy foods and drinks has a wide range of positive benefits for student health and learning outcomes such as:
 - providing important nutrients that students need to be alert and engaged in classroom
 - activities and for healthy physical development and performance
 - supporting the development of healthy eating habits and preferences
 - paving the way for good health and prevention of chronic illness.
- It is important that parents/carers, teachers and students work together to support a whole-school-approach to healthy eating and build a school culture which supports students to choose nutritious foods and drinks, and a healthy lifestyle.
- A healthy school food service:
 - makes it easy for students to choose healthy snacks and meals
 - offers a variety of nutritious foods
 - promotes foods that are consistent with Australian Dietary Guidelines
 - can be an avenue for consistent and continual health education
 - complements the diverse elements of the school curriculum
 - involves students, parents and the wider school community
 - is an integral part of the entire healthy school environment.
- The School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy provides information and advice about:
 - what is a healthy school food service
 - whole-school approach to healthy eating
 - what foods should be provided in a healthy school food service
 - the importance of a school food service policy
 - food safety
 - tips on operating a viable and healthy school canteen

- the role of the school council in school canteen operations or sub leasing to a private provider
- The School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy applies to all foods and drinks provided in the following areas:
 - school canteens and contracted school food services
 - external businesses and retail food outlets supplying schools (e.g. milk bars, cafes and bakeries)
 - vending machines
 - school curriculum activities
 - rewards and incentives
 - school sporting days, social events and productions
 - school-based breakfast programs
 - outside school hours care programs on school grounds.
- The School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy does not apply to:
 - foods and drinks used for the management of individual student's health conditions
 - student lunches and snacks brought from home
 - student birthday celebrations
 - non-school-related events and activities managed by external organisations on school grounds e.g. community sport
 - school camps.

Aims

- To ensure the school applies a whole-school approach to health education, with teachers playing the central role in the education of students.
- If applicable, to ensure the School Council manages the canteen in line with legislation.
- To ensure the Northern School for Autism complies with DET policy and guidelines.
- To ensure that all cooking/food technology programs have an appropriate learning intention.
- To ensure that all food served to students is healthy and contributes to student wellbeing.
- To ensure that food is stored and served in a hygienic manner.
- To ensure that food is served in an occupationally safe, purpose built, environment.
- To support home/school partnerships.
- To encourage parents/carers to provide healthy food for students.

Implementation

- The school will adopt DET's mandatory policy for food service.
- There will be three categories of foods available in the Canteen and/or promoted in the curriculum:

Everyday category (Green)

Foods and drinks in the Everyday category are consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and are most suitable for school food services.

Foods and drinks in the Everyday category are based on the basic food groups and include:

- breads and cereals, rice, pasta, noodles
- vegetables
- fruits
- dairy foods – reduced or low-fat milk, yoghurt and cheese
- lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, nuts* and legumes (dried beans and lentils)
- water.

Select Carefully category (Amber)

Foods and drinks in the Select Carefully category contain some valuable nutrients, but may also include unhealthy ingredients. They are mainly processed foods that have fat, sugar or salt added.

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The school will limit the availability of these foods. They will not be promoted at the expense of foods and drinks from the Everyday category.

Foods and drinks in the Select Carefully category include:

- full-fat dairy foods, low-fat ice-cream
- 100 per cent fruit juices and 100 per cent fruit-juice based ices
- artificially sweetened drinks
- reduced-fat processed meats
- commercially prepared hot foods
- reduced-fat, high-fibre snack foods
- margarines, oils, spreads, sauces and gravies.

Occasionally category (Red)

Foods and drinks in the Occasionally category are not consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and are not recommended for school food services.

Schools should limit the availability of these foods and drinks to no more than two occasions per term.

Foods and drinks in this category include:

- deep-fried foods
- pastry-based or crumbed hot foods
- savoury snack foods – crisps, chips, biscuits
- ice-creams and ice confections – chocolate-coated and premium ice-creams, icy-poles and ice crushes
- cakes, muffins, sweet pastries, slices, biscuits and bars
- cream, butter and copha.

Should not be supplied

The following should never be supplied due to their high sugar content:

High sugar content soft drinks including energy drinks and flavoured mineral waters with high sugar content.

Confectionery including chocolate, lollies, yoghurt compound and coatings, fudge and chewing gum.

• The school will:

- apply the policy to all food and drink services provided to the school community by the school
 - ensure EVERYDAY food and drinks are always available as the main choices and SELECT CAREFULLY food and drinks are selected carefully and limit the availability of OCCASIONALLY food and drinks.
 - never supply high sugar content drinks and confectionery
 - work with their community to implement this policy as part of a whole-school approach to promoting healthy eating
 - develop a whole-of-school food services policy to establish a healthy eating platform for the school community.
- As part of the Health and Physical Education curriculum, the school will promote healthy eating.
 - Parents/carers will be discouraged from supplying sugary drinks in school lunches.
 - This policy applies to school events such as celebrations, the fete and sports activities.
 - For further information, the school will refer to:

Department Resources

For the School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy, and resources available to assist schools in implementing the policy, see:

[School Confectionary Guidelines](#)

[Healthy Eating in Victorian Schools](#)

[Other Resources](#)

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The [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](#) offers free information and resources, menu assessment, and training on how to supply and promote healthy foods and drinks in-line with the School Canteens and Other Food Services Policy. For further information call 1300 225 288 or visit the website and provides a range of services including:

- [FoodChecker](#): a free online menu, product and recipe assessment tool. Classify your foods and drinks as Everyday, Select Carefully, Occasionally, and Confectionery and high sugar content soft drinks, and get instant feedback on healthier changes

[Training for schools](#): learn more about the policy and how to make healthy changes in your school in this free 1 hour training module. Go at your own pace and save your progress as you go

[Recipes](#) for Everyday and Select Carefully

[Food and drink ideas](#) for ingredient swaps and cooking tips which provides a range of fact sheets including:

- a School Community survey – sample survey questions to invite students, staff, volunteers and families to provide their feedback and ideas relating to the school food service/s
- strategies to support a whole-school approach to healthy eating – practical actions that school leaders, staff, food services, students, families and community groups can perform to support a whole-school approach to healthy eating
- newsletter insert ideas – a range of topics and selected resources for schools to use when drafting newsletter inserts
- healthy school celebrations – a range of food and non-food ideas to celebrate classroom birthday parties and other special events in fun and healthy ways
- healthy fundraising ideas – a range of food and non-food ideas to raise funds for the school, while encouraging and supporting a healthy lifestyle

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

As part of the normal school program, teachers need to be mindful that food related activities are consistent with teaching students positive food and hygiene habits. Students need to be introduced to a range of foods with consideration to the frequency in the three food categories: "[Everyday Food Category, Select Carefully Food Category and Occasional Food Category](#)" (Go For Your Life).

Teachers should provide a curriculum that supports healthy food choices and encourages students to become involved in food-related activities, for example planning meals, growing foods, shopping for food products, cooking and promoting foods. Food should also be prepared in a hygienic and occupationally safe (purpose built) environment.

As part of normal school program, teachers need to be mindful that food related activities are consistent with teaching students positive food habits. Students need to be introduced to a range of foods being mindful that children and adolescents should be encouraged to:

- eat plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruit;
- eat plenty of cereals, preferably wholegrain;
- include lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives;
- include milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives (reduced-fat varieties should be encouraged for school age children and adolescents);
- choose water as a drink.

Care should be taken to:

- limit saturated fat and moderate total fat intake;
- choose foods low in salt;
- consume only moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing added sugars.

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School Food Preparation Programs

Food preparation activities generally have a number of overlaying goals. The product produced through the activities is regularly the least important of the goals. Cooking programs are used for providing opportunities to:

- exchange communication with staff or peers;
- follow directions – verbal, visual (pictorial) or visual from a recipe;
- practice turn taking and sharing;
- develop social skills, including waiting;
- improve fine motor and/or gross motor skills;
- develop hygiene, self help and independence skills;
- develop safe work habits with kitchen equipment;
- develop table manners for eating in a group setting;
- eating enjoyable food that the students produced.

Food preparation programs should:

- make it easy for students to choose healthy snacks and meals;
- offer a variety of nutritious foods;
- promote foods that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia;
- be an avenue for consistent and continual health education;
- complement the diverse elements of the school curriculum;
- involve students, parents/carers and the wider school community;
- be an integral part of the entire healthy school environment.

School Organisation, Ethos and Environment

The school will:

- Offer a variety of nutritious foods during cookery and other food related activities;
- Be creative with presentation and preparation of healthy foods;
- Maintain consistent messages about healthy foods in all parts of the school operation;
- Provide nutritional suggestions for parents related to treats for special occasions.

Food Consumption Guidelines

Lalor Campus – food may be purchased by classgroups, as part of the consumer and enterprise skills, Applied Learning Program. Food is also served via the canteen program and during special event activities.

Reservoir Campus – all cooking programs take place in the Student Kitchen. This space is timetabled for each class to use. The menu is planned by the teacher and any particular requirements communicated a week prior to the session to the Healthy Living Coordinator to purchase. In general food should not be stored, prepared or consumed in classrooms. All food for student consumption will be purchased by the Healthy Living Coordinator and stored in the Student Kitchen with the exception of food brought from home for regular recess or lunch breaks. A cookbook with recommend recipes is available.

Healthy Living Coordinator – Email will be available for staff to write special requests in regard to programs or class needs. Class teachers should communicate dietary advice to the HLC prior to the preparation of food trays. Please refer to the Roles and Responsibilities document for a clarification of the HLC duties.

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Therapeutic or Educational Programs – if an afternoon tea program is recommended, trays will be prepared by the Healthy Living Coordinator, stored in the Community Kitchen and should be picked up from/delivered back to the Community Kitchen each day.

Special food activities – should replace the consumption of regular food breaks (recess and lunch) to ensure the number of meals and quantity of food consumed is not excessive.

Birthday/other parties – parties should be celebrated by singing "Happy Birthday". Teachers are encouraged to provide a happy birthday card or certificate for students. Parties and other celebrations should be structured and provide teaching and learning opportunities.

Donation of food by parents/carers and/or others – food donations should all be sent to the Student Kitchen. Home baked foods should not be provided to students for the following reasons:

- Some children are on restricted diets and should not be eating high calorie foods.
- There is as a risk of reaction to food/allergies and it is necessary to careful about what food is served to minimise the chances of a student suffering an allergic reaction.
- Parents/carers of other students may be unaware their children are eating donated, baked goods and may well be unhappy about the school facilitating this arrangement.
- There are issues around preparation of food/safe food handling and food service.

Breakfast/food program – if a student is coming to school without breakfast/food please see a member of the leadership team and arrangements will be made to provide breakfast/food for the student.

Special Lunches – Reservoir Campus: once a term the parent/carer fundraising group provide a special lunch order day.

Risk Management – prior to conducting a cooking program teachers should complete a 'Cooking Risk Management' form.

Student Kitchen OHS

- Classroom staff should bring visuals to sessions in the Student Kitchen.
- Student Medical Management plans are on display in the first aid room and on the first aid notice board in the staffroom.
- Hazardous substances other than dishwashing liquid and dishwashing tablets and sprays for tables will not be stored in the student kitchen but in the locked cupboard in the student kitchen which students do not access.
- Cleaning products are available in the Student Kitchen. Classrooms should assist in tidying up after their session. The HLC ensures the Student Kitchen is left tidy at the end of the day. Cleaners will clean the kitchen daily. Fridges, ovens and cupboards will be thoroughly cleaned each term. Cutting boards will be put through the dishwasher 3 times a week, and bench tops will be disinfected once per week as per Department of Health regulations.
- In the event of a fire please follow the Emergency Management Plan.

References

- Australian Guide to Healthy Eating
/www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-food-guide-index.htm
- DET Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Program -
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/pages/healthpromo.aspx
- DET Go For Your Life - *http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/management/gfy/plancat.pdf*

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- DET, AusVELS, Health and Physical Education - <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/hpe/index.html>
- Healthy Canteen Kit -
https://www.eduveb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/schadmin/schops/healthycanteen/gfyl_policy.pdf
- www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/Pages/health.aspx
- www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/finance/pages/canteen.aspx

Evaluation

The policy will be evaluated as part of the three year policy review cycle (July 2021) or if guidelines change (latest DET update early June 2018).

This policy was first ratified by NSA School Council on 30 October, 2014

The first update was ratified on 26 March 2015

Subsequent updates were ratified on 18 February 2016 and 6th December 2018

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FOOD CATEGORIES

Foods and drinks from the Everyday category are consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* and are most suitable for school food services. Providing a wide range of these healthy foods is important for variety. Foods and drinks in this category should be promoted as tasty, fresh and good value choices. These foods should be included as part of the canteen menu wherever possible.

EVERYDAY CATEGORY (GREEN FOODS)

Foods and drinks in the Everyday category are based on the basic food groups and include:

- breads, grains, rice, pasta, noodles and breakfast cereals
- vegetables
- fruits
- dairy foods – reduced or low-fat milk, yoghurt and cheese
- lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, nuts* and legume (dried beans and lentils)
- water

These foods and drinks are the best choices because they:

- are often high in nutrients and fibre
- are low in saturated fat and/or added sugars and/or salt
- help to avoid an excess kilojoule intake.

Within this category even healthier choices can be made. Wholegrain breads and cereal products are higher in fibre, for example grainy bread, high-fibre breakfast cereals, air-popped popcorn. Water is also an important part of the Everyday category. Checklist for Everyday Foods:

- Include most often as the main choices on the canteen menu
- Make available every day the canteen is open
- Strongly encourage and promote these foods and drinks
- Include as the main choices at school events and activities involving foods and drinks.

**Food allergies are the most common triggers for anaphylaxis (severe allergic reactions) in children. Eight foods cause 90 per cent of food allergies: peanuts, cow's milk, egg, wheat, soybean, tree nuts (for example, cashew), fish and shellfish. Schools should be aware of the risk of hidden allergens. Check your school's policy regarding students with severe allergies.*

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SOMETIMES (AMBER) FOODS

In between are a range of foods and drinks that contain some valuable nutrients but may also have some unhealthy ingredients. These foods are included in the Select Carefully category. Examples of foods and drinks in this category include:

- full-fat dairy foods – milk, yoghurt and cheese
- processed meats
- commercially prepared hot foods
- margarines, oils, spreads, sauces and gravies
- snack food bars (for example, breakfast bars, cereal bars, fruit bars)
- cakes, muffins, sweet biscuits and slices
- savoury snack foods and biscuits
- low or reduced-fat ice-creams, milk-based ice confections and dairy desserts
- ice blocks and ice slushees based on 100 per cent fruit juice
- drinks – 100 per cent fruit juices, some moderate-kilojoule sports waters
- artificially sweetened drinks
- some breakfast cereals (with added sugars and/or saturated fats and low fibre).



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RARELY (RED) FOODS

Foods and drinks in this category are not consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* and are not suitable for school food services. Foods and drinks in this category are based on the 'extra foods' as defined in the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* and include:

- sugar-sweetened drinks – sports drinks, cordial, fruit-flavoured drink
- deep-fried foods
- pastry-based or crumbed hot foods
- savoury snack foods – crisps, chips, biscuits and other similar products
- ice-creams, ice confections and dairy desserts, for example chocolate-coated and premium ice-creams, icy-poles
- cakes, muffins, sweet biscuits, slices, bars, donuts, danishes, croissants, cream, butter, Cofa, chocolate spreads.

These foods and drinks are the least suitable as, generally, they:

- are very low in nutritional value
- are high in saturated fat and/or added sugar and/or added salt
- provide excess kilojoules.

Foods and drinks which fit into the Occasionally (red foods) category should be supplied on no more than two occasions per term.



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